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ABSTRACT

This study examined the match between teacher comment intentions and preservice teacher interpretations of and reactions to the comments. Participants were three students enrolled in a course entitled "Approaches to Teaching." The students were required to keep a reflective dialogue journal. The teacher provided written comments about journal entries on an adjoining page, and students were encouraged to write responses to those responses. As the teacher wrote comments, she made audio recordings of her intentions for each comment. At the end of the semester, students completed interviews that discussed their reaction to the teacher's comments. The study examined data from students' journal entries, student interviews, questionnaires, and the teacher intent logs. The matches between teacher comment intentions and students' interpretations of and reactions to the comments were evaluated according to the following categories: affirmative comments, nudging comments, informing comments, and personal comments. Data analysis indicated that the matches between comment intentions and student interpretations/reactions ranged from a strong match (76%) to a weak match (39%). When the match was strong, there was a strong dialogue pattern and a higher proportion of reflective writing. At times, students interpreted different comment intentions, felt their writing was misunderstood, resisted the comment, felt the comment was blase, or had no reaction to the comment. (Contains 31 references.) (Author/SM)

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INQUIRING INTO OUR OWN PRACTICE: DO THE INTENTIONS OF OUR WRITTEN COMMENTS MATCH WITH STUDENTS' INTERPRETATIONS OF AND REACTIONS TO THEM?

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Abstract

Instructor comments in student journals are seen as essential in teacher education literature. However, study of the effectiveness of teacher comments comes from research on compositions rather than teacher education journals. This document reports on a teacher researcher study on the match between teacher comment intentions and the students' interpretations of/reactions to the comments. The participants, three students enrolled in an "Approaches to Teaching" course, were required to keep a reflective dialogue journal as a course assignment. Besides the journals, interviews, questionnaires, and teacher intent logs were additional data sources. The matches between teacher comment intentions and students' interpretations of/reactions to those comments were evaluated according to the following categories: affirming comments, nudging comments, informing comments and personal comments. One student's journal showed a strong match (76%); one student's journal showed a moderate match (50%); and one student's journal showed a weak match (39%). At times, students' interpreted a different comment intention, felt their writing was misunderstood, resisted the comment, felt the comment was blasé, or had no reaction to the teacher comment.

INQUIRING INTO OUR OWN PRACTICE 'DO THE INTENTIONS OF OUR WRITTEN COMMENTS MATCH WITH STUDENTS' INTERPRETATIONS OF AND REACTIONS TO THEM?

Writing in journals is a commonly accepted activity in teacher education programs. Various universities and teacher education programs view journal writing as a way of developing and practicing reflectivity (Francis, 1995; Grimmett, MacKinnon, Erickson, & Riecken, 1990; Ross, 1987, 1990; Valli, 1992; Zeichner & Liston, 1987). When journal writing is used in teacher preparation programs, supervisors, mentors, and/or instructors may respond to the students' journal entries. Some responses are in written form, with responses added to the students' journal pages (Canning, 1991; Surbeck, Han, and Moyer, 1991). Some journals may take the form of an on-going written dialogue, with the journal passed back-and-forth between writers (Diakiw & Beatty, 1991; Freiberg & Waxman, 1990). Thus the text of the reflective journal can be viewed as the basis for discussions with colleagues or discussions between students and instructor (Smyth, 1992; Tremmel, 1993). The use of dialogue journals in teacher preparation programs are a means for teacher educators to understand preservice teachers' developmental stages and are a means of interpersonal communication (Zulich, Bean, and Herrick, 1992).

Recommendations for instructors or mentors to write responses in students' journals are found in the literature (Canning, 1991; Colton and Sparks-Langer, 1993; Ross, 1990). Although instructor comments are viewed as being essential in the journals of teacher education students, study of the effectiveness of teacher comments comes from research on compositions rather than teacher education journals. Writing composition theorists and researchers Graves, (1994), Warnock (1989), Fulwiler (1989), Thomas and Thomas (1989), Baumlin and Baumlin (1989), Anson (1989), McCracken (1984), and Ziv (1981) have offered views of categories and styles of teacher comments. Furthermore, students' perceptions of comments and student comments have been examined in the writing research of Beach (1989), Odell (1989), Staton (1987), and Ziv (1981).

As a teacher educator of preservice teacher education students, I explored the content of dialogue journals of preservice education students (my students' writing and my teacher comments). In particular, I probed the match between my teacher comment intentions and students' interpretations of/reactions to the comments.

Procedures

Methodology

My personal purpose in wanting to examine the journals and the match between my teacher comment intentions and the students' interpretations of/reactions to them was to improve my own teaching practice. I wanted to do the best I could to encourage the reflective writing/thinking of my students in a university-based preservice education class. Thus I took the stance of a teacher researcher. Zeichner (1993) concurred with my efforts to conduct research within the situational and social context of my own practice:

> The research agenda that I support in teacher education is one that involves a continuing series of research efforts carried out publicly by teacher educators within their own programs that focus on ways in which particular program structures and activities, and their own actions, are implicated in the particular kinds of reflective practice evidence by their students. (Zeichner, 1993, p. 38)

Participants

Participants were students enrolled in a section of an Approaches to Teaching course. Approaches to Teaching was a three semester hour course that introduced general strategies and skills of instruction. All twenty-five of my students were required to keep a reflective dialogue journal as a class assignment. At the end of the semester, I asked for students to volunteer to be interviewed on a confidential basis about their journals. Three students' volunteered to be interviewed and thus their dialogue journals became the focus of my examination of the matches between my teacher comment intents and students' interpretations of/reactions to the comments.

Data Collection

The reflective dialogue journal assignment was explained at the beginning of the semester. I wrote comments on the opposing blank page for each entry and I encouraged the students to write responses to my responses. Journals were turned in to me eight times throughout the semester. Students generally chose topics from our course or from happenings outside of our course that could be related to our education course content. However, two entries had required topics. At the sixth journal entry/turn-in period, I required the following journal topic: describe a discipline related critical incident that you experienced, analyze it according to the discipline approaches from our text, and analyze its negative and positive points. At the eighth and final journal entry/turn-in period, I required the following topic: redefine the four terms you defined on the first day of class, that is, reflection, journaling, teaching, and learning.

As I read the twenty-five student journals and wrote comments in them, I made audio recordings of my intentions for each comment. There was a separate taped log for each of the twenty-five students. The teacher intent logs of the three volunteers were transcribed at the end of the semester.

All twenty-five students responded to an open-ended questionnaire on the last full day of class. Questions were devised to uncover the students' interpretations of/reactions to my comment and what may have caused them to engage in a dialogue with me following my comment. The questionnaires of the three volunteers were used.

At the end of the semester, tape recorded interviews were conducted with the three volunteers. The interview took the form of a protocol analysis of the dialogue journal entries. Participants reread their entries and my comments and spoke about (a) their reaction to my comment and (b) whether my comment was helpful or not and if so, how or why. They were also asked to explain why they did or did not write responses right next to my comments.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data concerning the match between my teacher's comment intentions and students' interpretations of/reactions to the comments was framed by my theoretical knowledge of the social aspects of writing, my knowledge of the student participants as the course instructor who interacted with them throughout the semester, the students' perceptions of the exchanges as evidenced in the interview transcripts and the questionnaires, my teacher intent logs, and the journals themselves.

My comment intentions from the teacher intent logs and the students' interpretations of/reactions to the comments from the interviews were identified according to four teacher comment categories: affirming teacher comments, nudging teacher comments, informing teacher comments, personal teacher comments. The four teacher comment categories used in the analysis of the match between my teacher comment intentions and the three students' interpretations of/reactions to the comments, stemmed from my associated research into students' reflective writing, teacher comment categories, and written dialogue patterns in a student/teacher journal (Krol, 1996). Other student interpretations of/reactions to my comments that did not match the teacher comment categories were also identified.

Match Between a Teacher's Comment Intentions and Students' Interpretations of/Reactions to the Comments

The following listing displays the categories used to uncover the matches between teacher comment intentions and students' interpretations of/reactions to the comments.

1. Affirm the student's'
   - understanding
   - feelings
   - views
   - ideas
   - actions

- thinking processes

2. Nudge the student to
   - think more
   - think differently
   - move or consider a course of action
3. Inform the student with
   - pedagogical knowledge
   - other knowledge
   - advice
   - an educational term
4. Personal expressions of the teacher's
   - mutual experience
   - mutual concern or problem
   - mutual view
   - invitational remark

The students' interpretations of/reactions to my comment were considered a match to my intentions if the students' responses during the interview or on the questionnaires indicated they interpreted or reacted to the comment as being in the same category (affirm, nudge, inform, personal) as my intention for the comment. If the students interpreted or reacted to my comment as being in a different category than my intentions for that comment, there was a mismatch.

Students' interpretations of/reactions to my comments that were not a match or a mismatch of my intentions, were described by the following listing of other categories.

1. Student felt his/her writing was misunderstood
2. Student resisted or rejected the comment
3. Student felt comment was blasé
4. Student had no reaction

5. Student did not express his/her interpretation or reaction

As the matches are described in the following section, overall characteristics of the matches are described, and excerpts from journals, teacher intent logs, and interviews are included.

April's Journal: Strong Match

April was a 52 year old white female Secondary English Education major in her junior year. My teacher comments in her journal were 38% affirming, 34% informing, 24% nudging, and 3% personal.

April responded in writing to nudging comments more than any other category. April wrote responses to 71% of the nudging comments in her journal. When asked what she could recommend to me to get students to respond in writing as she did, April said:

> I think questioning was good, because every time you'd ask me a question then I would feel like I should respond to it, because part of journaling was the response back and forth. So the questioning was very helpful. And it was encouraging when you would acknowledge something that you would like that I wrote too. So that was helpful.

Thus April referred to nudging comments (questioning) and affirming comments (acknowledge something that you would like), as being important in creating written dialogue. Furthermore, April conceived journaling as "response back and forth" and the dialogue patterns in her journal reflected that conception.

My teacher intent log recorded a total of 29 comment intentions throughout April's journal. April's interpretations of/reactions to the comments as evidenced in the interview and questionnaire were counted as a match if they fell within the same comment category, that is, affirming, nudging, informing, or personal, as my intentions. April's interpretations of/reactions to my comments matched 76% of my intentions (see Table 1). The nudging category had the most frequent matches. Of the comments that I intended as nudges to

Table 1

Proportions of Matches Between Teacher Comment Intentions and Students' Interpretations of/Reactions to the Comments

	Participants		
% of Matches	April	Madison	Charlene
Affirming Matches	73	50	50
Nudging Matches	89	71	33
Informing Matches	75	17	33
Personal Matches	--	100	--
Total Matches	76	50	39
Interpretation Match Only			11
Mismatches	--	8	6
No Matches	24	42	44

her thinking, she interpreted/reacted to 89% of them as nudging comments. The match for informing comments was 75% and the match for affirming comments was 73%.

An example of a close match in the nudging category, relates to an entry in which April wrote about grading and teachers having power. In my intent log I said:

> I think I'm going to press her a little further on this aspect of grades or grading as power. I'm going to try to get her to think a little bit beyond teachers as the ultimate power holders in the grading game, by asking her to think who else is involved in holding the power of grading reins.

Thus I attempted to get April to think more and to think differently. The teacher comment in the journal read, "I'm especially interested in your 'grading as power' idea. Who else, besides teachers, holds or could hold, the 'power of grading' reins?" During the interview, April said about this comment:

> OK you asked a question at the end of this about who else besides the teacher holds the power of the grading reins. And that did help me to think about that in another way too. Because I was just thinking about teachers having the power of grading, but then we talked about that in class some more, about the parents having the power and so much importance being placed on grades. So this comment helped, it helped me think further about the grading.

Thus, April's statements that it helped her to "think further" and "think about that in another way", verify that my intentions of nudging her to think more and think differently, were matched. Additionally, April's reference to parents and her written response to the teacher comment that also brought up principals as having grading power, illustrate that she thought more and thought differently.

If the student's interpretation of/reaction to my comment was a completely different category than what I had intended, there was a mismatch between intentions and interpretations/reactions. There were no mismatches in April's journal.

However, no matches were found for 24% of my comment intentions. April simply did not express an interpretation or reaction to some of the comments. All of the comments that she did not talk about during the interview or write about on the questionnaire, were written in conjunction with another comment category, usually nudging, that she did interpret and react to. April did not talk about one informing comment and two affirming comments. On one occasion, no match was found between intentions and interpretations/reactions because Aprils' interpretation of/reaction to the comment was different from the four comment categories. My intent log identifies three intentions for a three part comment I wrote. First I intended to affirm her thinking processes. I said in my intent log:

> She did exactly what I wanted her to do, which is to think about a situation that would need the student to have delayed gratification and she ties it into her learning German. I'm just responding that that's a really neat thing.

I then intended to share a personal view: "I just want to make a personal comment that I wish I could speak another language." I ended with the intent to give her pedagogical information: "Then getting back to the idea that it's tough for learners in all areas to push themselves through the hard parts." However, April's interpretation of/reaction to all three parts of the comment, was that it was a blasé comment. She said during the interview, "Ok I just took that like for what it was for. You know just a little comment on what I wrote."

Overall, the match between my teacher comment intentions and her interpretations of and reactions to those comments was very close and was the strongest of the three participant's dialogue journals.

Madison's Journal: Moderate Match

Madison was a 20 year old black female Elementary Education major in her sophomore year. My teacher comments in her journal were 43% affirming, 28% nudging, 24% informing, and 5% personal.

Madison responded only to nudging comments, writing responses to 33% of the nudging comments in her journal. When asked what she could recommend to me to get students to respond in writing, Madison said:

> The only way I think that people would actually comment on everything that you write on, is if you say,"I would like you to comment on what I'm saying"...It's good to ask questions, especially thought provoking questions, that's definitely a plus. You know, like having someone say, "Oh OK yeah, how do I feel about that." Especially if you ask them how they apply that in their future. I noticed that when you asked me that, I did think on how I could use that when I become a teacher. I would ask questions, future-oriented.

So Madison mentioned nudging comments, that is, "thought provoking questions" and suggested I ask for comments, as a means to create written dialogue. Moreover Madison appreciated nudging comments that urged her to think of a future course of action. This preference coincided with her tendency to write about future courses of action in response to my nudging comments.

My teacher intent log records a total of 24 comment intentions throughout Madison's journal. Madison's interpretations of/reactions to the comments were counted as a match if they fell within the same comment category, that is, affirming, nudging, informing, or personal, as my intentions. Madison's interpretations of/reactions to my comments matched 50% of my intentions (see Table 1). The nudging category had the most frequent number of matches. Of the comments that I intended as nudges to her thinking, she interpreted/reacted to 71% of them as nudging comments. The match for the one personal comment was 100%, the match for affirming comments was 50% and the match for informing comments was 17%.

An example of a close match in the nudging category, relates to an entry in which Madison identified the discipline approach that was used by her teacher aunt, as intimidation. In my intent log I said:

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> Because she seems to admire her aunt and admire what she did, I want to carefully phrase this. I'm going to ask what might be the effects if only intimidation/fear was used all the time with all the students. This is to get her to think about those words that she used, but hopefully not in a way that she perceives as criticism of her aunt.

Thus I attempted to get Madison to think more, especially about the consequences of an intimidation technique. The teacher comment in the journal read, "What might be the effects if only intimidation/fear was used all the time with all students?" During the interview, Madison said about this comment:

> When I read this it was like, I went off like, what could have happened from her using intimidation. You know how the kids could just totally close her out, become very afraid of her, no type of rapport with the teachers and students. So yeah, that was my initial reaction. It was very helpful because it made me think through a little further. It made me realize that's something that I can not do personally. For me, that's not a discipline method that I would like to take or would take.

Thus Madison's statement that the comment made her "think through a little further", verified my intention of nudging her to think more. Furthermore, even though the nudging comment did not nudge her to a future course of action, she thought of a course of action she wanted to take regarding discipline in her future class.

There was an 8% mismatch between intentions and interpretations/reactions, involving two comments. The comment intentions were both informing, but Madison interpreted and reacted to them as nudging comments. She said about one, "It really made me think." Besides the mismatch, she also resisted or rejected the information that I gave her in the comment saying, "I totally disagreed with that." About the other comment she said, "It did actually make me sit down and think, well could I actually do this?" Here

again, Madison followed her propensity to consider future courses of action even when not nudged to so.

No matches were found for 42% of my comment intentions. Like April, Madison did not express an interpretation or reaction to some of the comments. All of the unmatched comments that she did not speak about, were written in conjunction with another comment category, usually nudging, that she did interpret and react to. Madison did not talk about five affirming comments, one nudging comment, and three informing comments. On another occasion, no match was found because Madison simply resisted or rejected the comment. Referring to learning styles, my nudging comment was, "What other styles are there, besides the ones you have mentioned as your favorites?" During the interview Madison said, "A few crossed my mind but I didn't focus on it...I guess I just brushed it off."

Overall, the match between my teacher comment intentions and Madison's interpretations of/reactions to those comments was moderate and was not as strong as April's but was stronger than Charlene's.

Charlene's Journal: Weak Match

Charlene was a 20 year old white female Secondary English Education major in her sophomore year. My teacher comments in her journal were 50% nudging, 33% affirming, 17% informing, and 0% personal.

Charlene did not write responses to my comments and said she did not think about writing a response to my comments underneath the comments. When asked what she could recommend to me to get students to respond in writing, Charlene said: "If it's something that you really want to hear their thoughts on, then I would write, you know just write please respond at the end of the comment." Unlike April and Madison, Charlene did not suggest the use of questions or nudging comments. But like Madison's second suggestion, she suggested that I specifically direct the journal writer to respond

My teacher intent log recorded a total of 18 comment intentions throughout Charlene's journal. Charlene's interpretations of/reactions to the comments as evidenced in the interview and questionnaire were counted as a match if they fell within the same comment category, that is, affirming, nudging, informing, or personal, as my intentions. Charlene's interpretations of/reactions to my comments matched 39% of my intentions (see Table 1). The affirming category had the highest percentage of matches. Of the comments that I intended as affirmations to her thinking, she interpreted/reacted to 50% of them as affirming comments. The match for nudging comments was 33% and the match for informing comments was 33%.

An example of a close match in the affirming category, relates to an entry in which Charlene wrote about the use of television in classrooms. In my intent log I said, "Definitely want to respond to her statement where she says using media should be selective, because I definitely agree with her." Thus I wanted to affirm Charlene's views. The teacher comment in the journal read, "I think you've noted something important." Charlene said about this comment, "I just agreed with what you said because it was pretty much just reiterating what I had said...in some ways it let's me know whether you kind of agree or disagree."

Unlike April or Madison, there were instances (11%) where Charlene's interpretations of nudging comments, but not her reactions to the comments, matched my comment intentions. For example, I intended to get Charlene to think differently about parental involvement in schools. The teacher comment in the journal read, "Besides school-wide functions that involve parents, can you come up with ideas that an individual teacher can do to invite/involve parents?" During the interview Charlene said, "I read and I sort of thought, well you know I really should think about this, but I went on and did something else. No, I really didn't think of any other ideas." Thus Charlene interpreted the comment as a nudge to her thinking, but did not do any thinking.

Even when Charlene's interpretations or her interpretations/reactions matched my intentions, there were occasions when she resisted or rejected my comment. For example, at one nudging comment she said, "I kind of disagreed with it too" and at another she said, "Well I wasn't out to think about anything other than just what my mom and I had talked about on the phone."

There was a 6% mismatch between intentions and interpretations/reactions, involving one comment. The comment intention was nudging but Charlene interpreted and reacted to it as an informing comment when she said, "It kind of shed a little light on the idea that, you know, lesson plans are a lot more important than you would first think." Besides the mismatch, she also felt that I had misunderstood her writing. She wrote on the questionnaire, "When I read your second comment, I remember thinking that I wasn't saying lesson plans weren't important, they just shouldn't be more so than the students."

No matches were found for 44% of my comment intentions. Like April and Madison, Charlene did not express an interpretation or reaction to some of the comments. All of the unmatched comments that she did not speak about, were written in conjunction with another comment category, usually nudging, that she did interpret. Additionally, there were two occasions when no match was found because Charlene's interpretations of/reactions to the nudging comments were that I had misunderstood her writing. She said of both that she thought she had addressed my question in the entry. Also on another occasion there was no match because she found my affirming comment to be blasé, saying of the comment during the interview, "It didn't really affect my thinking at all, it's kind of a given."

A phenomenon occurred during the interview that related to Charlene's interpretations of/reactions to my nudging comments. As noted above, there were several occasions when Charlene felt her writing had been misunderstood and her entry had already addressed my nudging question. However, during the interview, Charlene became aware that her writing had not been misunderstood because her entries really had not

addressed my question. She recognized that she probably could have responded to the questions. Charlene told me that if I had written "please respond" at the end of the comment, it would have made her "go back and look and then you know write about what I thought about your comment or your question." Thus through the protocol analysis of her journal after the completion of the course, Charlene was able to interpret and react to the nudging comments with a stronger match to the comment intentions than she had during the semester.

Overall, the match between my teacher comment intentions and Charlene's interpretations of and reactions to those comments was low and was the weakest of the three participant's journals.

Conclusions and Implications

Based on the findings of this study, several conclusions aand implications can be drawn.

First, the matches between my teacher comment intentions and the students' interpretations of/reactions to my comments, ranged from a very strong match to a very weak match. As Odell's (1989) research found, writers either accepted or rejected comments written to them, based on their personal assessment of the comments. Thus when the journal writer assessed my comments but did not perceive my intentions and/or accept my comments, the match was weak. When the journal writer assessed my comments and perceived my intentions and reacted to them in writing, the match was strong.

Because of my associated research with examining dialogue patterns in a student/teacher dialogue journal, I also noted that where the match was strong, that is, April's journal, there also existed a strong dialogue pattern. A dialogue pattern initiated by my teacher comment was evident in April's journal with 17% of my teacher comments eliciting a written response from April and 21% of her journal writing occurring as responses to my teacher comments. Where the match was moderate, that is, Madison's

journal, a less pronounced dialogue pattern existed. The dialogue pattern initiated by my teacher comment was evident in Madison's journal with only 9% of my teacher comments eliciting a written response from Madison and 11% of her journal writing occurring as responses to my teacher comments. As mentioned previously, the weakest match, that is, Charlene's journal, had no dialogue patterns. Charlene did not respond to any of my comments and therefore none of her journal writing occurred as a result of my comments.

Because of my associated research with examining reflective writing in students' reflective journals, I also noted that where the match was strong, that is, April's journal, there also existed a higher proportion of reflective writing than in the other journals. Where the match was weak, that is, Charlene's journal, there was the lowest proportion of reflective writing.

Theorists of both reflection and writing espouse the importance of the role of the coach in the development of a learner (Moffett, 1968; Schön, 1987) and the importance of the mutualities and collaborations that can and do exist between a teacher and student (Bleich, 1988; LeFevre, 1987). When my commenting intentions were misconstrued, the student and I were not able to engage in a collaborative growth through a written dialogue pattern. Nor was I able to coach or shape the student's writing away from non-reflective modes toward reflective writing modes.

Second, according to the participants whose journals were a moderate and weak match, they would have responded if I had specifically directed them to. However, directives to respond should be used judiciously and prudently lest they engender merely perfunctory written responses to complete the assignment. As April, whose journal had a strong match said:

> I think it was good that you left it open to write what you wanted to, because that leads your thoughts...if you would lead every assignment I think that would be bad because then the student wouldn't just wander, let his mind go to where he was interested.

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Thus as the teacher responders in student journals, we need to look at our students' journals carefully and recognize whether dialogue and reflective writing is occurring. Student writers who do not engage in dialogue and who are not writing in a reflective manner, should then be invited to respond in writing to a comment we hope will engage them in deeper and more reflective writing/thinking.

Third, proportionally I used more affirming comments in the participants' journals than any other type. However, majority of the matches between my comment intentions and the students' interpretations of/reactions to the comments, occurred with nudging comments. April and Madison both noted the importance of my nudging comments to their writing and thinking. Moreover, they did not react to other types of teacher comments if they were written in conjunction with nudging comments. Even though Charlene resisted, rejected , and or did not react to most nudges, when a nudging comment was written in conjunction with another comment type, the nudge overshadowed the other comment type for her and she interpreted the nudge.

The overall successful match between my nudging comment intentions and the students' interpretation of/reactions to them, implies that nudging comments are imperative in dialogue journal writing. The affect that my nudging comments had on the students was in accordance with Thomas and Thomas' (1989) description of statements and questions that "invite the writer to continue talking, in search of more content or a sharper purpose" (p. 122). Whether nudging comments are offered singly or in conjunction with affirming, informing and/or personal comments, they are the means by which I, and other teacher educators, may foster and nurture reflective thinking/writing and dialogue in teacher education students' journals.

Fourth and finally, of my comment intentions that were not a match with the students' interpretations of/reactions to them, some were mismatches and others were misunderstood, resisted, rejected, or thought to be blasé. Yet the weakest match, that is, Charlene's journal, actually changed during the protocol analysis of the interview with

Charlene's interpretations of my comments more closing matching my comment intentions. Furthermore, during the interview, all participants were able to talk about their understandings of my comment intentions and their reactions to them. In essence, student's were able to be metacognitive about my teacher comments and the affect the comments had on their thinking/writing.

Thus as teacher educators and responders in our students' journals, we could explain our general commenting intentions to our student at the beginning of the semester. Throughout the semester we could use written questionnaires, student-teacher interviews, peer interviews, or peer comments in journals, as opportunities for our students to think metacognitively about the intentions of our comments and the affects of those comments on the students. Students' understanding of teacher comment intentions would provide for stronger matches between teacher comment intents and students' interpretations of/reactions to the comments.

Simultaneously, as we listen to our students' interpretations of /reactions to our comments throughout the semester by the above means, we will become more knowledgeable about our own commenting tendencies and their affects on our students. With that knowledge we can shape our comments, our teaching practices, and the reflective thinking/writing of our teacher education students.

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